

Testimony of  
DR. JACQUELINE NISSEN

Before the  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

February 18, 2021

RE: UCONN HEALTH BUDGET

I am writing to you as a citizen of Farmington, CT, as well as an employee and senior faculty member of the UConn Health. I have been at UConn Health in various capacities since 1985, and now am the Senior Associate Dean for Faculty and Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education.

UConn is a state gem and so critical to the future of the region and the State. I urge you to do all that you can to preserve UConn Health's budget this legislative session, and not to approve further cuts to the university and the health center, for the following reasons:

The UConn School of Medicine (SOM) is a state medical school whose **dedication to in state residents** for professional development has been unwavering. If we want to invest in future health care and keeping physicians in our state we need to continue to support our campus. Right **now students from Connecticut represent 85% of the classes** and UConn Health is the classroom for the next generation. Our School of medicine is the single largest driver of our physician workforce both in our medical school and graduate medical education programs.

UConn graduates of the SOM, both medical students and residents/fellows are the single largest driver of our physician workforce in the state. With the COVID crises of the last two years combined with our physicians aging out, and a looming physician shortage of greater than 130,000 physicians nationally, who will take care of our citizens if not our trainees we invest in so greatly?

UConn Health attracts over **\$100 million in extramural funds** – most from out of state – to help drive growth and education in Connecticut. These funds go directly to our state's economy, primarily by providing salaries for physician researchers, research assistants and other skilled jobs that Connecticut has sought to recruit and retain in the state. With the state's investment in Bioscience Connecticut, and with the Jackson Laboratory on our campus, how can we turn around and put the research infrastructure at risk? This time more than ever we need to continue our investment in health care, genomics, and recruitment of researchers so that UConn Health can be on the map and remain a destination for Genomics and other bioscience jobs and companies.

We need to continue our momentum in training the next generation of doctors, dentists and researchers for Connecticut, and the provision of expert and award-winning quality care to all, inclusive of under-served population as well as community services.

Thank you very much for your support of UConn and UConn Health, and for recognizing the importance of this institution to the future of the State of Connecticut.